

Press Release



Sparrows installs state-of-the-art simulator at Training Centre in Aberdeen

Sparrows Offshore has continued the upgrade of facilities at its Training Centre at Tyrebagger, Aberdeen, with the installation of a new KranSim 600 advanced crane training simulator.

Operating much like an aircraft flight simulator, the KranSim produces an eerily realistic 'virtual offshore environment' in which the crane operator uses standard crane controls to move containers, drilling tubulars and other simulated loads between offshore installations and supply vessels.

"We can train and test crane operators on their reactions to emergency situations on the simulator in ways which one could never safely do on a real crane," says Sparrows training manager, Susan Fraser. These scenarios include slipping clutches or brakes, snapped lifting slings, hydraulic failures or complete power outages.

"The simulator tests the operators' alertness to the fault as it develops, giving them the opportunity to intervene early," says Sparrows chief instructor Alex Craib. "If they delay their response, the simulated fault worsens, in a realistic way, demanding increasingly radical operator intervention to prevent potential damage or injury." Sparrows will use the simulator, just as airlines do, to expose crane operators to simulated emergencies, and also to increase the number of hours' routine operating experience included in training. The simulator will become a cornerstone tool used in the bi-annual competence re-assessments undertaken by every Sparrows crane operator.

The KranSim 600 is the latest in the generation of simulators developed by Drilling Systems (UK) Limited and can simulate a range of different crane models and operating environments, including fixed platforms, floating rigs, vessels and floating production systems (FPSOs). In addition to simulating faults, the instructor can also key in changes in wind, weather and wave height which affect lifting work.

"Sparrows was involved in the original KranSim project in 2000 with Drilling Systems and the HSE, and we have been following the developments since," says Susan Fraser. "With the launch of the KranSim 600's latest software, we feel the simulator has advanced sufficiently for us now to invest directly in installing KranSim at Sparrows Training Centre."

The Sparrows Training Centre has been the subject of investments approaching £1.5 million in the last year, including installation of a new Liebherr BOS 2600 pedestal crane, purchase of a mobile Liebherr LTM1030 telescopic crane, installation of the new KranSim simulator and an increase in the Centre's dedicated training and competence assessment personnel from 13 to 19 staff.

“This year’s investments mean Sparrows Training Centre is the only offshore crane training centre to combine both actual and simulator-based pedestal crane training,” says Sparrows chief operating officer in Europe, Malcolm Wilson. “A crane operator cannot learn the core skills – and particularly the crew coordination skills of working with banksmen and deck crew – from simulator training alone. Conversely, one cannot safely introduce system failures in a real crane. Sparrows Training Centre now offers the best of both the real and virtual training environments.”

Further information

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